

agreement or to make an informed judgment that an agreement is not possible. The recipient and the complainant do not need to meet with the mediator at the same time, and a meeting may be conducted by telephone or other means of effective dialogue if a personal meeting between the party and the mediator is impractical.

(c) *When agreement is reached.* If the complainant and the recipient reach an agreement, the mediator shall prepare a written statement of the agreement, have the complainant and recipient sign it, and send a copy of the agreement to CRC.

(d) *Confidentiality.* The mediator shall protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of the mediation process. No mediator may testify in any adjudicative proceeding, produce any document, or otherwise disclose any information obtained in the course of the mediation process, unless the mediator has obtained prior approval of the head of the mediation agency.

(e) *Maximum time period for mediation.* The mediation shall proceed for a maximum of 60 days after a complaint is filed with CRC. This 60-day period may be extended by the mediator, with the concurrence of the Director, for not more than 30 days, if the mediator determines that agreement is likely to be reached during the extended period. In the absence of such an extension, mediation ends if:

(1) Sixty days elapse from the time the complaint is filed; or

(2) Prior to the end of the 60-day period, either

(i) An agreement is reached; or

(ii) The mediator determines that agreement cannot be reached.

(f) *Unresolved complaints.* The mediator shall return unresolved complaints to CRC.

§ 35.33 Investigations.

(a) *Initial investigation.* CRC will investigate complaints that are unresolved after mediation or reopened because the mediation agreement has been violated.

(1) As part of the initial investigation, CRC will use informal fact-finding methods, including joint or separate discussions with the complainant

and recipient to establish the facts and, if possible, resolve the complaint to the mutual satisfaction of the parties. CRC may seek the assistance of any involved State, local, or other Federal agency.

(2) Where agreement between the parties has been reached pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the agreement shall be put in writing by DOL, and signed by the parties and an authorized official of DOL.

(b) *Formal findings, conciliation, and hearing.* If CRC cannot resolve the complaint during the early stages of the investigation, CRC will complete the investigation of the complaint and make formal findings. If the investigation indicates a violation of the Act or this part, CRC will attempt to achieve voluntary compliance. If CRC cannot obtain voluntary compliance, CRC will begin appropriate enforcement action, as provided in § 35.36.

§ 35.34 Effect of agreements on enforcement effort.

An agreement reached pursuant to either § 35.32(c) or § 35.33(a) shall have no effect on the operation of any other enforcement effort of DOL, such as compliance reviews and investigations of other complaints, including those against the recipient.

§ 35.35 Prohibition against intimidation or retaliation.

A recipient may not engage in acts of intimidation or retaliation against any person who:

(a) Attempts to assert a right protected by the Act or this part; or

(b) Cooperates in any mediation, investigation, hearing or other part of CRC's investigation, conciliation, and enforcement process.

§ 35.36 Enforcement.

(a) DOL may enforce the Act and this part through:

(1) Termination of, or refusal to grant or continue, a recipient's Federal financial assistance from DOL under the program or activity in which the recipient has violated the Act or this part. Such enforcement action may be taken only after a recipient has had an opportunity for a hearing on the record before an administrative law judge.